

MAR 1952 51-46

CLASSIFICATION RESTRICTED
 SECURITY INFORMATION
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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 FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT NO [REDACTED]

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CD NO. --

COUNTRY	Poland	DATE OF INFORMATION	1951
SUBJECT	Economic - Capital goods, agriculture, metal products industry		
HOW PUBLISHED	Monthly periodical	DATE DIST.	31 Mar 1953
WHERE PUBLISHED	Warsaw	NO. OF PAGES	4
DATE PUBLISHED	Feb 1951		
LANGUAGE	Polish	SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]

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SOURCE Mechanik, Vol XXIV, No 2, Feb 1951.

THE METAL-PRODUCTS INDUSTRY IN THE POLISH SIX-YEAR PLAN

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Farm Machinery

Before 1934, Polish factories making agricultural machinery were in general very small. They produced machines and tools, almost exclusively hand operated or horse drawn for small peasant farms.

Production dropped from its highest point of 60 million zlotys in 1928 to 3 million in 1935 and amounted to 18 million in 1939. During the Three-Year Plan, a far-reaching specialization of factories was effected, the production of tractor plows was started, and a beginning was made in the production of harvesters and large winnowing-threshing machines.

The Six-Year Plan requires new production for socialist agriculture. The target for 1955 is an annual production of 750 combines, 14,300 tractor plows, 5,000 tractor drills, 5,600 binders, and 6,000 motor threshing machines.

Mass production connected with this wide assortment is not feasible in the plants available. With this in view, two new factories will be built, a factory for harvesting machinery and a new factory for agricultural machines.

Automotive Industry

So that agriculture may profit from these types of equipment, the automotive industry will raise the production of tractors from 2,340 in 1949 to 11,000 in 1955, converting the major part of the production to caterpillar tractors instead of the old type with wheels. For this purpose, the Six-Year Plan provides for the construction of suitable production plants.

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The automotive industry will achieve even greater growth in the field of automotive vehicles. Trucks of the 3½-ton will be produced at the rate of 13,000 annually; passenger cars, at the rate of 12,000 yearly. A new factory will produce twelve thousand 2½-ton trucks per year. During the course of the Six-Year Plan, the production of motorcycles will increase from 4,200 in 1949 to 32,000 in 1955 and the production of bicycles, from 19,100 to 340,000.

A new plant will be built for the production of high-pressure combustion engines.

Railroad Rolling Stock

The railroad equipment industry reached a satisfactory degree of development during the Three-Year Plan. The Six-Year Plan foresees a relatively small growth of production, which is to reach a 315 standard-gauge locomotives yearly, 18,500 freight cars (computing two axles as one unit), and 630 passenger cars. The main emphasis is placed on the development of narrow-gauge locomotives, with up to 250 units annually slated for manufacture. Also scheduled is the introduction of new types of production: electric locomotives, locomotives with combustion engines, cars for electric railroads, and special mine locomotives.

Shipbuilding

In the dockyard industry, it is planned to develop shipyards for ocean-going vessels. These yards are to achieve in 1955 a production of 150,000 dead-weight tons, or eight times as much as was produced in 1949. Shipyards for inland waterways should be able to meet the growing requirements for barges and will start the production of tugs.

Castings

The casting industry stands on a relatively low level. There are few independent foundries. Most foundries are only sections in steel mills or metal-fabricating plants.

Prewar statistics give a total of 253 foundries, with an annual production of 200,000 tons of iron castings, valued at 97 million zlotys.

The Six-Year Plan has set an annual production goal for 1955 of 724,000 tons of iron castings, 149,000 tons of steel castings, and 6,000 tons of non-ferrous metal castings. Special emphasis is being placed on castings for machines, automotive vehicles, and construction work, boilers for central heating, heaters, and pipe fittings.

This production target is to be achieved mainly by foundries in plants building machinery. Modern factories for heaters and central heating boilers will be built solely as foundries.

Precision and Optical Instruments

The precision and optical instruments industry is unevenly developed in Poland. The Six-Year Plan aims at raising the value of production by opening up a series of new branches. An especially strong emphasis should be placed on the production of antifriction bearings, the foundation for which was laid during the Three-Year Plan in 1950 but which must be increased manyfold. Soviet aid to Poland guarantees that the production of antifriction bearings, without which there is no real economic self-sufficiency, will have no obstacles. The plan foresees the completion of a factory for ball bearings and the construction of a plant for typewriters.

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The production of water gauges, gas meters, surgical instruments, and optical apparatus will expand in other sections of the precision and optical instruments industry.

Mass Production Items

Mass production commodities have been badly neglected. The production of screws, nails, wire, enamel, furniture, etc., used to be accomplished in a great number of plants, usually small. These plants worked by manual methods and were inadequate to meet domestic requirements.

During the Three-Year Plan, this industry was integrated and reorganized. However, investments here were relatively small, because other industries had higher priorities.

The Six-Year Plan will increase the production of screw products by 15 percent, construction hardware by 279 percent, and containers and enamelware by 75 percent.

General

There are two ways by which the metal-products industry's production will expand to 350 percent of 1949. One is through the construction of about 40 new large modern plants; the other is through the expansion of over 40 existing plants. The construction of new factories will take place mainly in under-developed areas, and this will change somewhat the geographical pattern of the metal-products industry. In addition to Silesia, there will arise strong industrial regions in Warsaw and Staropolska. Furthermore, 250 additional metal-products factories will be expanded.

In technology, there is a trend to save on machines by pressure casting or die forging. The application of rolled or drawn products is gaining popularity for example, the so-called periodic rolling in the production of automobiles. Soviet plants have been introducing on a large scale welded parts made from pressed elements, which result in considerable saving in material.

The plan calls for the greatest possible mechanization of internal transportation and auxiliary operations. The mechanization of a foundry is especially important. There will be a sevenfold increase in machine molding.

The next element in technical progress, as indicated by the law on the Six-Year Plan, is that of automatization—application of multitool milling machines (multicutters, combination turret lathes, automatic machines) and the simultaneous processing of several objects (multiskewer automatic machines), pre-selection, and the application of group milling machines. There is a large unused potential in the utilization of automatic milling machines.

There is to be widespread standardization of materials, parts, and assemblies. This permits the speedy construction of new types of machines and conversion from small-scale serial production to large-scale serial production.

The plan for the industry envisages 66 percent higher labor productivity. Norms must be systematically corrected, not only in the light of technical progress, but also in the light of organizational progress.

The plan specifies that the metal-products industry is to lower costs of production by 17 percent as a basic condition for fulfillment of the plan. This requires economies in the consumption of raw materials, fuel, and power and the reduction of inventory surpluses and administrative expenditures.

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Fulfillment of the plan will not be an easy matter. The plan is not only a problem of constructing a certain number of factories. The Six-Year Plan means ideological mobilization of all the manpower in the metal-products industry, the basic industry on which the fulfillment of the whole economic plan is dependent.

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